



CHARIVARIA

MR. IAIN MACLEOD has announced the names of the Board set up to handle the re-settlement of ex-Regular soldiers—Major-General Dunphie, Mr. Goss, Mr. McFadzean and Mr. McLean. It looks as if they should be able to find three vacancies right away.

Smart to the Last

AMERICA has the envious knack of imposing glamour on everything, not least by advertising, in New York now, a dainty pistol for ladies, "pastel-pretty



in three glimmering shades: turquoise, gold and pink." What is more, "it comes in a satin-lined, mahogany-finished case," a neat match for the case which its victims may be expected to go in.

Stretching it Thin

In its loyal devotion to junior royalty the *Daily Express* must beware of putting ideas into young heads. It was an inspiration, under the headline "The Young Raleigh of Bluebottle," to reproduce the Millais painting alongside a photograph of Mr. Uffa Fox and Prince Charles, even though the parallel wasn't exact (Raleigh and the talkative old salt were on land, and the other two weren't: Raleigh was obviously absorbed in the yarn, and Prince Charles frankly wasn't listening; the salt was pointing to far horizons with a fine sweep of the arm, and Mr. Fox had a forefinger diffidently raised, like an umpire with no real faith in a decision)—but it would be a pity if the Prince got the idea, when his press-cuttings came in, that Raleigh was ever heir to the throne, that he

(Prince Charles) was expected to colonize Virginia and introduce the potato, or that Millais was ever actually on the staff of the *Daily Express*.

No Harm in Asking

"Most of the questions" in a questionnaire fired at British atom plant manufacturers by would-be competitors in Japan, says a report, "have been answered in an evasive way, so that the Japanese will still have to pay if they want the know-how." As it is unlikely to be disclosed officially just how cleverly this was done, a few specimen questions and answers are given below:

Q. What do you know about glove-box design and operation? Also remote handling tongs?

A. Not a thing.

Q. Have you restacked any good graphite lately?

A. Have you?

Q. Tell us something about thermal neutron flux.

A. Not likely.

Q. Are you investigating the physics design problems associated with reactor control by means of vertical cadmium rods passed into the graphite stack through the top of the biological shield?

A. What if we are?

Q. What is the atomic weight of heavy water?

A. Get some and weigh it.

If You Want to get a Headline . . .

FOR charming unsophistication the *Daily Telegraph* has long held Fleet Street's blue riband, and reinforced its



claim afresh by reporting that Mr. Suhrawardy, hot from Arizona, "surprised crowds at La Guardia airport" when he stepped off the plane wearing a "ten-gallon cowboy hat." The last

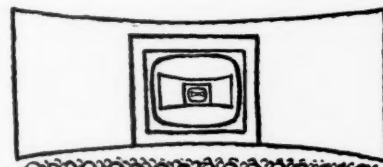
time that crowds at La Guardia airport are on record as being surprised was when some world politician, hot from Arizona, stepped off the plane not wearing a ten-gallon cowboy hat.

Litter Problem Intensified

It is really time that the Minister of Pensions and National Insurance got a finger on the nation's pulse. How many people does he expect to read beyond the title of his new Leaflet N.I. 92—"A New Opportunity to Earn an Increased Retirement Pension"?

Four-Cornered Fight

PROMISES of a contest to delight all true sportsmen are discernible in reports that an American television company



has declined a film company's advertisement saying, "Stop looking at this silly little box. Stop straining your eyes on this bleak, foggy picture. Tear yourself away from these nauseating wavy lines. Grab the little woman and take her out to some real entertaining movies." This hasty decision is bound to be reversed in time, once the TV men recognize the need to take space on the cinema screens saying, "Stop looking at these monstrous magnifications of the human face. Stop straining your neck-muscles counting these panoramic teeth. Get back home to the snug intimacy of a miniature musical on your twenty-one-inch screen." Once the battle got going it would beat boxing any day.

Look—No Hands

NEWS from the Wedgwood Memorial College, Stoke-on-Trent, is that a lot of students from foreign countries have

arrived for a fortnight's study course on the British way of life. An important element in this is the check that enables us to bring students from foreign countries here to study it.

Stranger Than Truth

MEMBERS of an archery club at Burton-on-Trent are reported to have equipped their arrows with whistles, "because spectators who have watched Robin Hood on TV expect to hear arrows whistle." This is, of course, only the beginning of the movement to make real life toe the line and come up to telexpectations. In the end, when everyone is on Christian-name terms with complete strangers, children get a hundred pounds for each question correctly answered at end-of-term examinations, and M. and Mme. Armand Denis are actually in your own sitting-room with a baby chimpanzee, television itself will have to catch up, and show more programmes about people sitting round their TV sets.

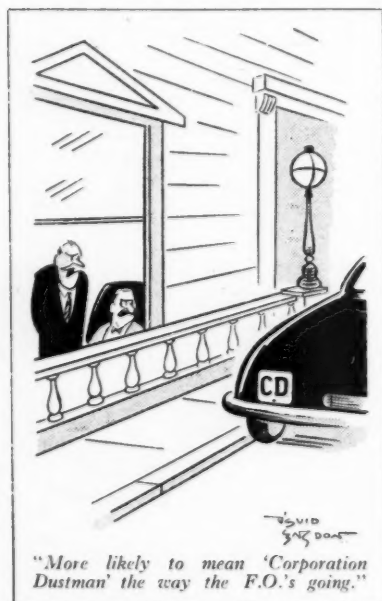
Mine Nationalized Host

(The police are investigating the finances of the State-run pubs in Carlisle.)

THE till may be empty, the cellar be dry,

The bar full of gangsters, but what care I?
For my Treasury masters have right good cheer

With a hundred-and-thirty-odd thousand a year.



"More likely to mean 'Corporation Dustman' the way the F.O.'s going."

AT THE HALT, QUICK MARCH!

NOTHING could be more logical than the orders just issued by the West German Army (which has the incomparable advantage over any other army that it must not at any price look too martial) concerning the wearing of medals. The Federal Service Order is to be worn first—an order instituted by President Heuss, which you might roughly compare with the General Service Medal in this country. This is to be followed by life-saving medals, if in possession, then by First World War medals and decorations, then finally by Second World War medals and decorations, as long as they do not bear a swastika, the last inconspicuous corner on the bottom left being reserved for the *Pour le Mérite* and the Knight's Cross with oak leaves, swords and diamonds.

The point about the West German Army which this instruction illustrates so well is this, that, although it is badly wanted to bolster up the land forces of N.A.T.O. and allow Mr. Sandys to abolish National Service, it mustn't seem so bellicose as to frighten peace-loving citizens like Mr. Khrushchev and Lord Beaverbrook.

Until now no satisfactory compromise seemed to have been reached between these extremes, and the Army looked like turning out to be just another satellite of the U.S. Army, with enamelled space-helmets on their heads and rubber-soled boots on their feet, only armed with British weapons to keep the British armament industry well primed with off-shore purchases and the German armament industry well occupied building miniature cars. Now, though, it looks as if a turning-point may have been reached, and the New Model Wehrmacht is to be brightened up with a few touches of traditional Prussian militarism, suitably caponized.

This is just as it should be. After medals, for example, what about jackboots? For years jackboots have been the symbol of the soldier in Germany, and it is futile to expect Germans to fight in overgrown plimsolls. The only thing is that if jackboots are to be issued again they must be worn with a subtle difference. My suggestion is that they should be worn on the arms.

Then there is the goose-step. In the First World War, when there was no B.B.C. to keep us in touch with reality, we used to believe that the Germans goose-stepped everywhere they went, even "over the top." The Treaty of Versailles naturally put an end to this; but by 1939 the goose-step was back—*tamen usque recurret*—except presumably among the panzer troops. By all means, then, let us have the goose-step again to boost the morale of the new West German Army; but to show that there is no harm in it, let it be confined to soldiers on sanitary fatigues.

Military bands, of course, have already made their appearance. There seems no objection to this, as long as they never play military music. There can be nothing wrong in a gay selection of waltzes or a rock 'n' roll session to keep Fritz's mind off warfare as he runs through his atomic gun-drill.

Monocled officers who click their heels and say "Zo! Then you will be shot!" must certainly be restored. It is all very well to point to the horrible record of the German General Staff, as if the British Army had not suffered plenty from its own General Staff; but the fact is that German soldiers *expect* to have officers about wearing eyeglasses and shouting "*Schweinhund!*" and N.A.T.O. will never get the fighting force it needs out of Herr Blank if it fails to realize this. They should be employed in the Welfare department, and perhaps in the Pay Korps and the Catering Korps, or whatever they are called.

General Staff officers, on the other hand, must wear furry Homburg hats with shaving brushes stuck in the band at the back, and little leather shorts, and embroidered waistcoats open at the front. They may carry their S.S. membership cards in their breast-pockets as long as they do not bear a swastika.

B. A. Y.

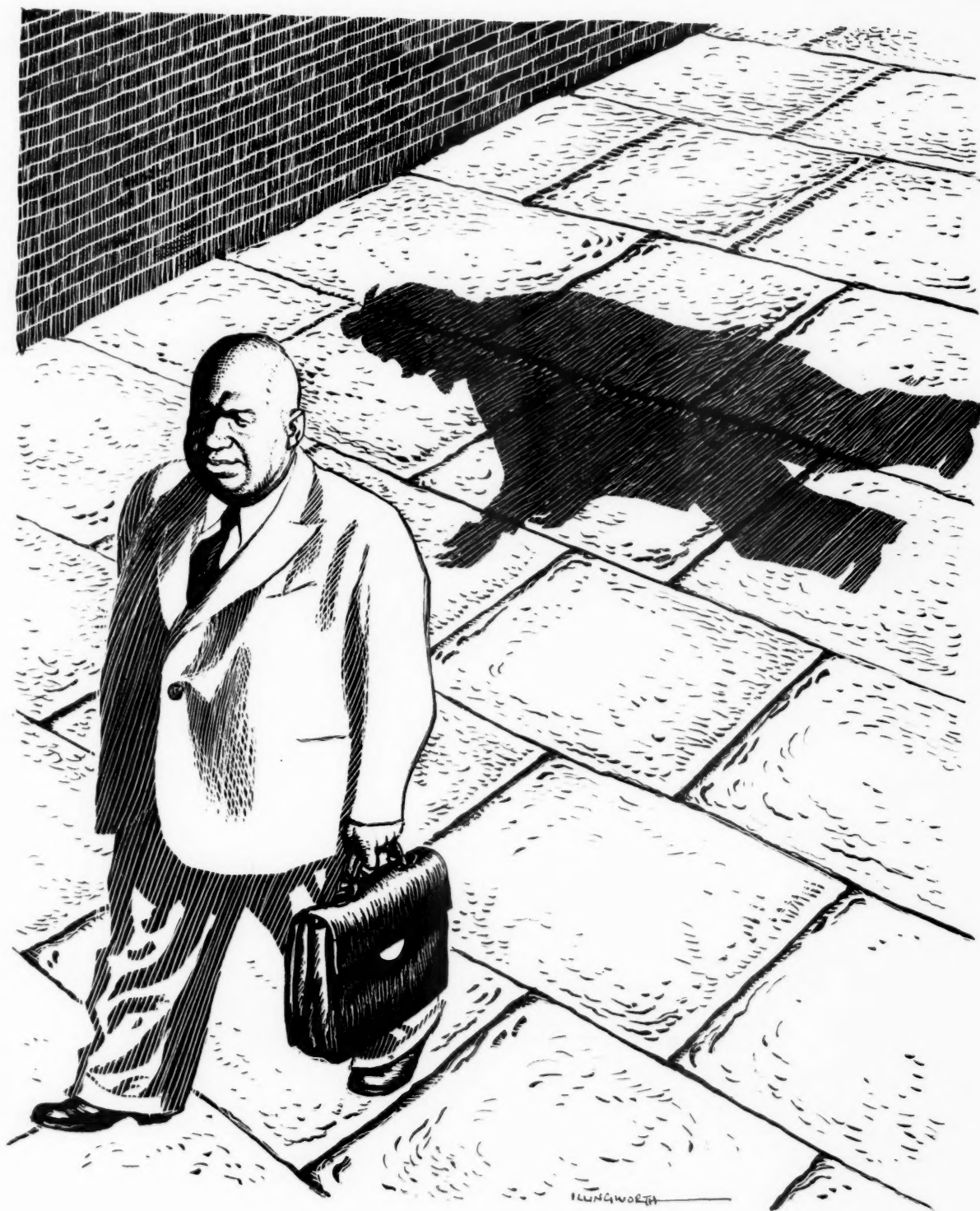
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"LOCAL INTELLIGENCE

"The Passing Thought is having to be passed on to next week."

The Shetland News

But this one takes some beating.



THE MAN WHO LOST HIS SHADOW



"Well, thank heavens it isn't a cigarette."

Mink Galoshes

By A. H. BARTON

CRANMER looked up from his desk in the Royal Naval Staff College. "I see where it reads in this White Paper here," he said, "that their Lordships are offering me big money to get out."

"That's right," said Purbright. "You going to do something about it?"

"I don't know," said Cranmer.

"Well," said Purbright, "you know what you should do when you find yourself at a loss."

"You think that I should write an Appreciation of the Situation in the proper staff college manner?"

"Yes," said Purbright.

"That I shall then know what to do? That the solution will drop off the end like the well-known ripe plum?"

"Yes," said Purbright.

"If you say so," said Cranmer, and began to write:

REVIEW OF THE SITUATION

1. I am a commander aged 40.
2. I have a wife, four children and a tortoise.
3. Their Lordships have now said that if I am axed they will give me £7,000 free of tax and £600 a year for the rest of my life; that I may volunteer for the axe; and that whether I volunteer or not their Lordships reserve the right to keep or axe me, as they see fit.
4. A state of amicable cold war, exhilarating to the intellect, may therefore be said to exist between their Lordships and myself.

FACTORS AFFECTING THE SELECTION OF THE AIM

5. I have three possible aims:

- (a) the good of the Service;
- (b) the good of me;
- (c) the good of the family.

6. As to (a), whatever I do their Lordships will do what they think is best for the Service.

7. Whenever in the past I have tried to do anything for the good of me I have been kicked in the stomach by the Horse of Fate.

8. This leaves me with Aim (c). An admiral once told me that he put the Service first because his family came first. I remember that a parrot was creeping up his wooden leg at the time. On this occasion their Lordships are looking after the Service and I may therefore relax and let the family come first.

THE AIM

9. To do what is best for my wife; for Dominick, Gail, Jasmine and Hew; and for Handbag the tortoise.

FACTORS AFFECTING THE ATTAINMENT OF THE AIM

The Navy

10. I like the Navy the more as I grow older, and older, and older.

11. Deductions

- (a) I would be sad to leave;
- (b) I might become glum and unpredictable;
- (c) My wife would not like this;
- (d) The children might get hell;
- (e) Handbag might retire permanently into his shell.

Civil Employment

12. H'm.

13. Deduction. H'm.

Money

14. I earn £2,000 a year now. I have

seen that if I leave the Navy I shall be given £7,000 now and £600 a year for the rest of my life.

15. Deductions

(a) My family would get more money now, and less very soon afterwards;

(b) More specifically, my wife would get more money now and less very soon afterwards;

(c) And Dominick, Gail, Jasmine and little Hew might get more education now, and less soon afterwards;

(d) Handbag would be all right. Dandelion heads are as free as the air;

(e) I wish I could get more value from the deduction in paragraph 13.

My Wife

16. I spoke to my wife on the telephone to-day. She said without emphasis: "£7,000 is a lot of money to receive at once. £600 is not a large

annual income. Whatever you decide, lovely man, is sure to be right."

17. Deductions

(a) My wife has not yet written her appreciation;

(b) She will do so promptly, but will never publish the result.

MY POSSIBLE COURSES OF ACTION

18. Course X. Not to volunteer for the axe.

Comments

(a) "You should never volunteer for anything, sir," is what an able seaman, touching his forelock, once said to me. "If you get it and don't like it you'll only have yourself to blame." A parrot was creeping up his wooden leg at the time.

(b) If I am axed it will not be my fault.

(c) My wife will never be tempted to think, in loyal silence, that it was





my fault she got much less money very soon afterwards.

(d) My wife is proud of her loyal silences, as well she might be. She thinks them explicit to a degree that I have never been able to achieve.

(e) If I adopt this course Dominick, Gail, Jasmine and Hew might thus have happier childhoods; and Handbag, who shows signs of being a crazy mixed-up tortoise, might become a more integrated tortoise.

19. *Course Y.* To volunteer for the axe.

Comments

(a) If I began at once to earn £15,000 a year I might not (see paragraph 11 (b)) become unpredictable and glum;

(b) My wife could have mink galoshes and everything that goes with them;

(c) Dominick, Gail, Jasmine and Hew could have everything that goes with them also;

(d) If I were accepted for the axe and if I failed to begin at once to earn £15,000 a year it would be my fault.

20. *Course Z.* To ask my wife to decide.

Comments

(a) The Aim is to do her good and she should know what is good for her;

(b) I can see from the deduction in paragraph 17(b) that this course of action is nevertheless unlikely to get me anywhere.

COURSES OF ACTION OPEN TO THE ENEMY

21. *Course A.* To axe me.

(a) *Likelihood.* H'm.

(b) *Effect.* Achievement of the Aim

would depend upon the deduction made in paragraph 13.

22. *Course B.* Not to axe me.

(a) *Likelihood.* H'm.

(b) *Effect*

(i) I would then be back there with the admiral and his parrot, putting the Service first because my family came first;

(ii) If I had volunteered for the axe (Own Course Y) and was yet not axed I would be in a superb position *vis-à-vis* wifely loyal

silences; and might well achieve the Aim;

(iii) But the conclusion in subparagraph (a) is not firm enough to permit me to suppose that their Lordships admire me so fondly that they would keep me if I applied for the axe.

ENEMY'S MOST PROBABLE COURSE

23. Their Lordships are well known to be unpredictable, and even glum, in their search for the good of the Service. Courses A and B are therefore equally likely.

MY PROPOSED COURSE OF ACTION

24. I have seen that Course Z, to ask my wife, is unlikely to get me anywhere. Course Y, to volunteer for the axe, might lead to loyal silences, to the detriment of the Aim. This leaves me with Course X, not to volunteer. This course, although inactive and defensive, I adopt with relieved alacrity and the feeling that Handbag will be pleased.

THE PROPOSED PLAN

25. To wait for it.

* * * * *

Cranmer put down his pencil.

Purbright looked up. "You going to do anything about it?" he asked.

"I don't know," said Cranmer.

Flat-Earther

and be damned to the I.G.Y.

BEING myself unquizzical
But moderately devout
In matters geophysical
I am the odd man out.

The cosmic architecture,
That monstrous mass of bubbles,
Does little, I conjecture,
To lighten human troubles.

And so with some defiance
This thesis I propound:
Ill was the day when science
Proved that the world was round.

The men who built cathedrals
Believed that it was flat,
Save for stray polyhedrals
Like Alps and Ararat.

The proud and pious people
Of London's old walled town
Dreamed never that Paul's steeple
Turned daily upside down.

Chill was the mental climate
That poised the prince and thrall,
The priest and mitred primate
Upon a spinning ball.

The splendour, pomp and power
Of fortress and of fane
Demand that wall and tower
Stand plumb upon the plane.

Shrewd was the thrust, and mortal
The blow to human pride
When pinnacle and portal
Were taken for a ride.

And now with bombs a-thunder
And lies like lightning hurled
Mankind stands lost in wonder,
The wonder of the whirled.

For Space has lost direction
And Time is out of joint.
A sphere may have perfection
But is devoid of point.

E. V. MILNER



"Don't quibble, lady—for the purposes of the by-law your little girl is a vehicle."

Envoy

By CLAUD COCKBURN

ALL right, so you can mention three features distinguishing the cœlacanth from the platypus: tell us who put up the money for the first production of V. Hugo's *Hernani*, and state without hesitation what distinguishing letters motorists from South Borneo and Easter Island respectively should have above their number plates. And from the extraordinarily smug look on your face I infer that you suppose this type of knowledge is about what the doctor ordered, and due to pay off handsomely, to which I can only reply by drawing your attention to the fact that what may be good enough for you may not necessarily be good enough for us—we are not any longer living in the early months of 1957.

Of course there were foresighted people who foresaw all this change in the what I call cultural or intellectual climatic environment as early as April. (And in that simple spirit of humility

may I just venture to inquire whether it ever occurs to you pundits and prominents of the early 'fifty-sevens, still parroting the long out-dated slogans of February and March, totally irrelevant though they be to our present frame of social reference, that life has passed you by?)

I grant you that May has a certain quaint period flavour, a breath of nostalgic charm—was it the Charleston or hobble-skirts that came in in that month? All the same, you know as well as I do that that's all so much frou-frou, no more essentially up-to-date than the Homburg hat or the atom-bomb that uncle used to make.

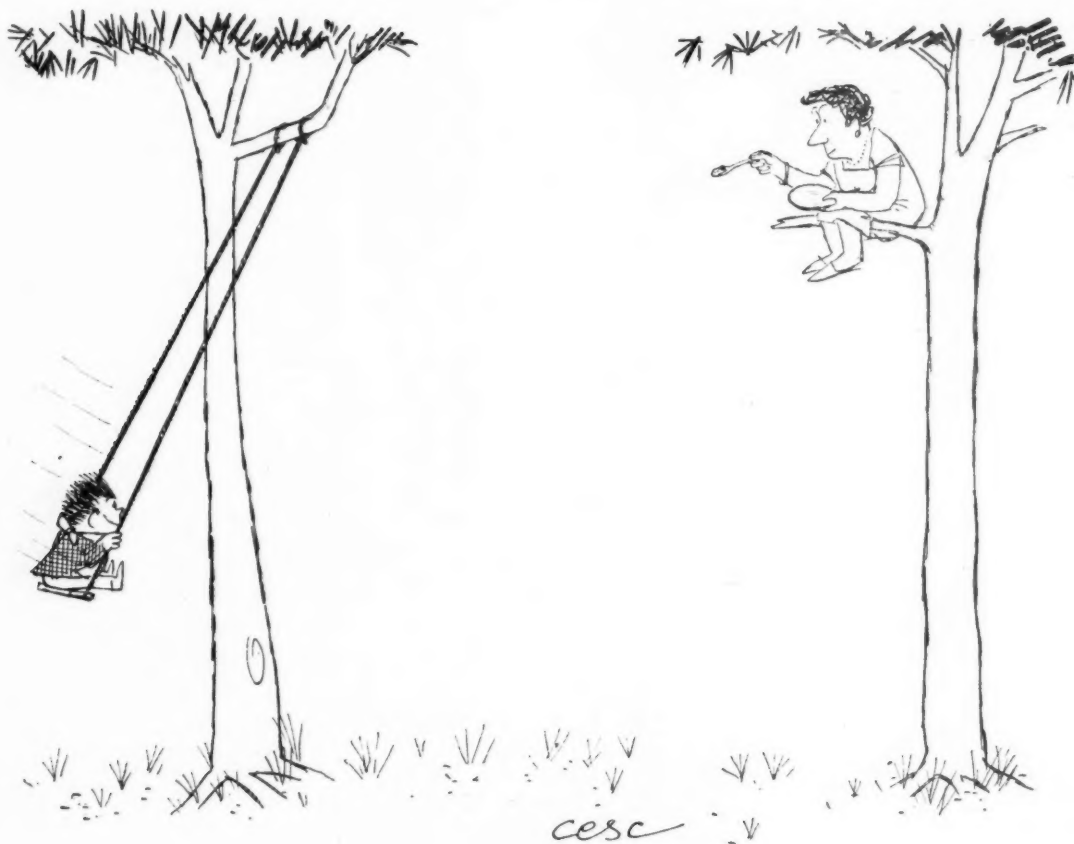
What's needed to-day is modern, up-to-the-minute thinking by men who know what it takes and therefore refuse to try to fill a trunk with information which could easily be fitted into an overnight bag.

Upon which, your thoughts will

immediately turn to—among others—United States Ambassador-Designate to Ceylon Gluck. A trail-blazer.

Nobody, it need scarcely be said, doubted for a moment that Mr. G. was of ambassadorial timber. He controls upwards of one hundred and forty-seven chain stores and, in two Presidential elections, can be proved to have contributed approximately £14,000 to the campaign funds of the Republican Party. In accordance, however, with an old-fashioned custom, a committee of the U.S. Senate had him in for cross-questioning, checking up on how he would feel when he got in there pitching among the Tamils and so forth.

According to published reports they asked him first whether he had read the United Nations Report on events in Hungary. Without hesitation the Ambassador-Designate replied that he had not so much as heard of it. They told him it had been big stuff in all the



papers—you *know*, they said, the United Nations and Hungary and all that. Gluck said he was sorry but he seemed to have missed the items referred to.

Asked whether he knew who happened to be Prime Minister of India he said he did. "But," said he, averting any tiresomely long-winded discussion of the matter, "I don't know how to pronounce it."

Then they wanted to know whether he knew the name of the Prime Minister of Ceylon. For some reason they seemed to think a bit of knowledge like that might come in handy. Gluck said that the name was "unfamiliar" to him "as yet."

Realizing that they had here a man who really knew the diplomatic score, a majority of the Committee at once endorsed his appointment to the post in Colombo—vital link in the bastions of containment.

Commenting on the episode with warm approval, a British Foreign Office spokesman said "It's a step in the right direction. Here in London we've suffered enough from these swots from some of the Latin American countries who've hardly presented their credentials before they're boasting they know the names of half the members of the Cabinet."

"Had a chap in not long ago who claimed he'd actually read some newspaper reference to the Suez Canal crisis. Next thing you know, that type of man starts asking how to get to the Edinburgh Festival or lecturing people on the time it takes to travel from Hyde Park Corner to the Marble Arch. It all makes for bad blood."

Gluck is the harbinger of the new late-1957 spirit in international affairs. Lloyd George—ahead of his time as usual—had done an early piece of spadework by announcing that he did not know the whereabouts of Fiume or some such contemporary centre of discord. His lead was unfortunately not followed, and until recently you had men going out as ambassadors to, say, Washington, who wasted hours of useful time boning up on the location of the line where the United States stops and Canada begins, or learning the genial Vice-President's first name.

This is not to say that Britain cannot, on occasion, find men for ambassadorial posts who possess the desirable combination of almost total ignorance of



"I told you to play down that scene with Laertes."

world affairs in general and the affairs of the country to which they are proceeding in particular, with a suitable indifference to both.

Yet too often, despite the vaunted "democratization" of our Foreign Office, such men are passed over, when it comes to the allocation of the "plums," in favour of the sort of ambassador who annoys everyone in Paris by knowing the number of seats several of the political parties have in the Chamber, and stuff like that.

It not only annoys people, it makes them suspicious. Nobody wants a man peering round the place with an appraising eye and saying "Surely that law's a new acquisition isn't it? Must be the one you passed last year. Read about it in the papers." A little more of that and it's a *non grata* for him, and the Vice-Consul is charged with espionage.

A lot of the trouble comes of course from a mistaken view of the functions and possibilities of ambassadors as a whole. A man reads some piece

describing some Envoy Extraordinary or other as having been "justly popular and generally regarded as one who had spared no effort to understand the problems facing the people" of wherever it is the man has been doing his diplomacy.

He may easily fail to grasp that the man is "justly popular" because a lot of members of the Government to whom he is accredited are avid for Scotch whisky and the latest gossip about the Royal Family. As for the problems facing the people, etc., etc., the only one he has to understand is the problem they occasionally encounter in seeking to gain some immediate major economic or other advantage in return for a long post-dated cheque.

It is to be hoped that Gluck's well-merited success will put an end to this era of misunderstandings, and that his plane pilot will be provided with a reasonably clear map showing which ocean Colombo, as distinct from Columbia, is close to.

A Riposte Pretty Juste

By H. F. ELLIS

IT is not quite *comme il faut* of these *gauche* Frenchmen to talk so much *blague* about the incursion of Anglicisms into their language. The *brusque brochure* issued by the *soi-disant* "Office of the French Vocabulary" à propos the increasing use in France of such English words as "best-seller," "businessman," "cover-girl," "dumping"

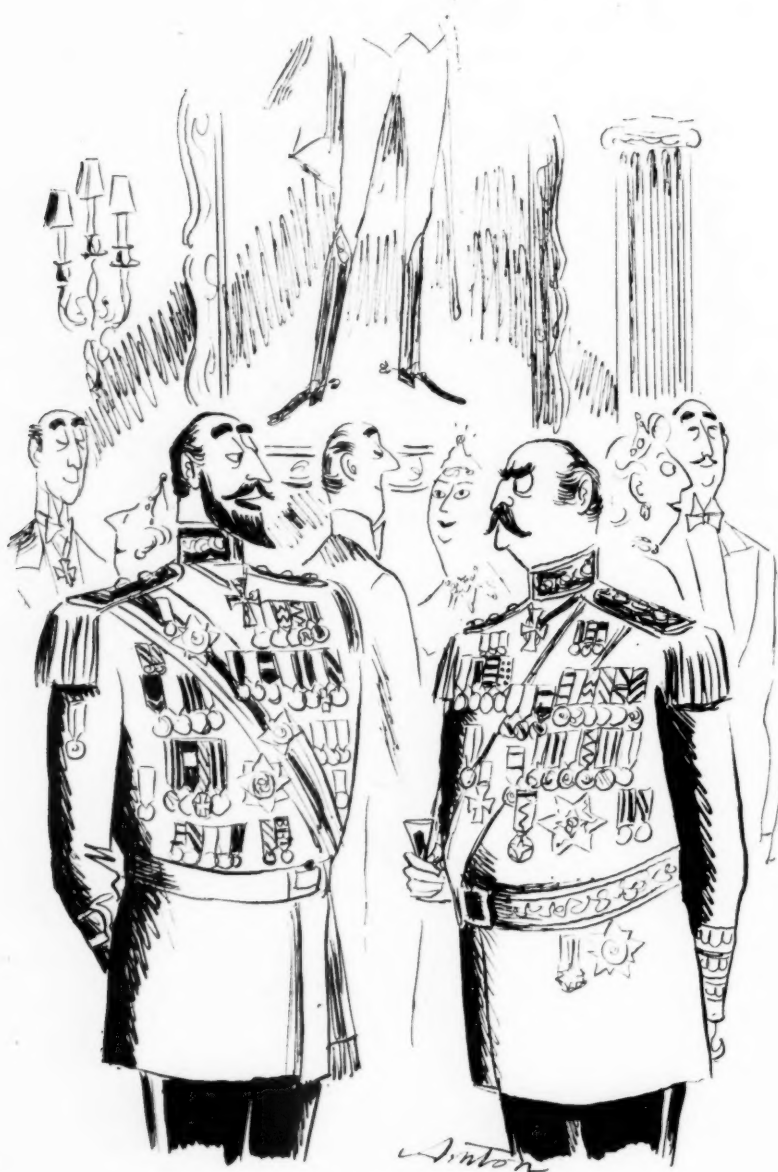
and "gangster" may well prove to be a *faux pas* that gives the *coup de grâce* to the *Entente Cordiale*.

The Office of the French Vocabulary (or *Office de Vocabulaire Français*, as these bigots no doubt prefer to call it) declares in its circular sent to prominent writers, doctors, lawyers and others that there is no objection to "useful

borrowings" but that the current craze for foreign words amounts to "an invasion that corrupts instead of enriching." They then give a list of current Anglicisms which just about gives the *congé* (or *knock-out*, as the French say) to their own argument. On the basis of this list a Frenchman may very well be heard to say, given the occasion, "*Le groggy manager est dans le grill-room*," or even "*Venez au bungalow de ma tante le week-end*. Elle donne un up-to-date surprise-party *dans le jardin*" (or possibly *une surprise-party*. It would be rash to assume that all neologisms are masculine. "*Le pin-up*," for instance, strikes me as distasteful. And what is the sex of "*sex-appeal*"?). "*Le dumping des businessmen, des gangsters et des racketters dans ce clearing est défendu*" is also good idiomatic French—or would be, if the use of the Anglicism "*clearing*" were not at the moment limited to financial contexts. It is nonsense to say that these sentences do not enrich a language. They ennoble it. They give it *élan*, *panache*, a certain—how do they say?—*chic*.

It is pleasant to know that some at least of the recipients of the O.F.V.'s circular agree in general with this view. They say, at any rate, that when you haven't got a word of your own for a thing you may as well borrow someone else's, which is a somewhat chilly and Gallic periphrasis for enrichment but means it none the less. "Toast," "week-end," "reporter" and "bungalow" are widely supported as indispensable. But there is a regrettable desire among a number of prominent Frenchmen to Gallicize their Anglicisms. M. Hervé Bazin, for example, would like "cocktail" to become *coquetèle*, and M. Jean Paulhan, who ought to know better, wants to spell "speaker" *spiqueur* and "week-end" *vécande*. This is enough to make an Englishman's blood *bouille*.

The weakness of the French position, what makes their alarm and resentment at the importation of a few invaluable English words and phrases seem so mean and contemptible, is that we have for centuries given the warmest possible welcome to countless fragments of their absurd language. We are admirably



"Care to make a swap?"

poised to strike back, if need be, and we shall not hesitate to do so. There must be give-and-take in these matters (and there again is a phrase they could probably well do with) or co-existence becomes impossible. If the French decide to root out "toast" and "rugby-man," we can easily do without *belles-lettres* and *pied à terre*. There is a lot to be said for dropping *tour de force* and *bijou* without waiting for further moves on their side. We can over-call them every time. Let us have no more *lèse-majesté* or *embarras de richesse*. We can dispense with *séances* and *serviettes* (there's enrichment for you), *risqués revues* and *mauvais quarts d'heure*. Away, if they insist on carrying the war à outrance, with their *terrains* and their *terrines*, their *pourboires* and their *douceurs*, their *débris* and their *débâcles* and all such bourgeois bric-à-brac. It is as easy to write "R.I.Y.P." as "R.S.V.P." any day.

It is also as easy to Anglicize Gallicisms as it is to do the other thing. Easier. "Provocative agent" sounds nice, and "the done thing" has richer overtones than "*fait accompli*." *Droit de seigneur* translates readily as "Top People's privilege," and anybody would rather spell *fainéant* and *fauteuil* some other way. The Office of the French Vocabulary had better be careful or they may find themselves a long way down on the deal. It won't cost us a penny, let me tell them, to drop the accents on *blasé*, *roué*, *rôle*, *élite* and *café* straight away.

One ought to be reasonable, of course. One or two French attempts at importation have undeniably been unwise. *Boyscoutisme*, for instance, is a word that no language should be asked to support. They could drop that without retaliatory action from us. But discrimination against so eminently exportable a word as "groggy" (twice as punch-drunk and debilitated, one may suppose, in the mouth of a Frenchman) should be resisted at all costs—certainly by the London *Charivari*.

"Cracks in Asia's second largest political monolith, the Indian National Congress which claims a primary membership of 8,000,000, have begun to appear at the same time as Mao Tse-tung has detected chinks in Chinese Communism."—*The Spectator*

What about wisecracks?



"London and Washington treat me with nothing but contempt, *Izvestiya* calls me a 'Feudalistic tyrant,' our customs are held up to the world as examples of barbarianism, we're in trouble with the U.N. Anti-Slavery Commission—by Allah, we had better strike oil soon!"

The Malice of the Elements

FROM sodium lamplight's sallow libel,
And strontium bone-rot's lame survival,
From chlorine in fountains, arsenic sprays,
From neon signs and selenium rays,
Let's keep our distance.

To nickel coinage, chromium fittings,
Carbon deposit, uranium splittings,
Magnesium flashlights, caesium clocks,
And bismuth tablets and gold-payment blocs,
Offer resistance.

With tungsten warheads, thorium fusion,
Barium cocktails, sulphur pollution,
With iron curtains and platinum Moms,
Fluorine dosage and hydrogen bombs,
No co-existence.

R. A. PIDDINGTON

America Day by Day

By P. G. WODEHOUSE

THERE are few more respectable clans in New York than the Cohens, but in every flock you will find the occasional black sheep, and it so happened the other day that both Myron Cohen and Sol Cohen were inmates of the Raymond Street, Brooklyn, prison. The former, being a tough guy with a record of twenty-five years in the coop, was allowed no bail, but the authorities told Sol's brother Emanuel that for \$500 Sol could be sprung, and Emanuel with an approving "Most reasonable" wrote a cheque for that amount.

"Okay?" he said to the authorities.

"Okay," they replied, and Emanuel, having a job to attend to, decided not to wait but to get about his business. He went off, and the authorities sent a warder to release Sol Cohen.

"Cohen?" said the warder to Myron Cohen.

"That's me," said Myron Cohen.

"This is good-bye," said the warder.

"It's been nice knowing you."

"Been nice knowing *you*," said Myron courteously.

"This way," said the warder, and a few moments later Myron was blithely signing out, giving his home address as 1818 Ocean Avenue, Brooklyn. Some hours after that the telephone bell at the prison rang. It was Emanuel Cohen, saying that he was still a brother short. Inquiries were made, and Sol Cohen was discovered in his cell.

"Oops, sorry!" said the authorities. "Excuse it, please."

Two officers were sent to 1818 Ocean Avenue. A householder opened the door.

"Cohen?" they asked.

"That's me."

"Come with us . . . Here you are," they said, arriving back at the prison.

"Here's Myron Cohen."

"Here's who?" said the prisoner.

"I'm Sam Cohen."

"What Cohen?"

"Sam Cohen."

"Not Myron?"

"Certainly not."

"I'll tell you what," said the authorities. "If you ask us, there's been some sort of a mix-up."

I understand that they have now received a picture postcard from Canada, signed "Love, Myron," and saying "Having wonderful time. Wish you were here."

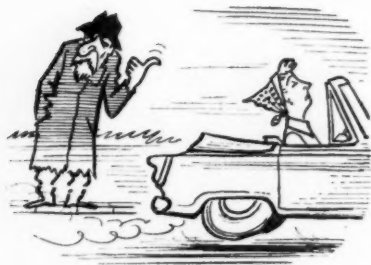
There has been a big boom lately in books of the "*I Was a Female Dope Fiend*," Pink Spiders, the frank, fearless autobiography of a woman who could never remember to add water to it" type, and it would be necessary for Oliver Goldsmith, if he were living to-day, to revise his view that no charm can soothe the melancholy of lovely woman who has stooped to folly. The wages of sin as of even date are not so much death as fifty thousand bucks for the serial rights and anything up to three hundred thousand for the movie end. Nowadays, when lovely woman stoops to folly she puts herself in the hands of a good literary agency and cleans up. The father driving his erring daughter out into the snow is a thing of the past. He welcomes her in, and asks if she can't wangle a small character part for him in the film.

It is many years now since I have had more hair on my head than the average billiards ball, but I still take a

benevolent interest in the affairs of those who have something to brush of a morning, and it consoles me a little for having to go about looking like Yul Brynner to reflect that hair does not always bring happiness. America has been rocked to its foundations these last few days by the story of Airman Donald Wheeler, who, ordered to get what is known as a "white sidewall" haircut, replied in so many words that he was blown if he would. And as the white sidewall involved "stripping the hair up to the crown of the head," who could blame him?

Well, the superior officer who had given the order, for one. He had Donald arrested and court-martialled, and for a while it looked as though the latter was in for four months' hard labour, loss of \$200 in pay and reduction in rank from airman third class to basic airman (private). I am happy to say that milder counsels prevailed. The penalties have been revoked, and he is to be allowed to keep his hair as it is. (And very nice it looks, they tell me.)

Nothing has been settled yet in the other recent hair sensation, that of Gene Wesson, a supporting actor in the musical comedy *Happy Hunting*. It seems that Mr. Wesson, after playing since the opening last winter with black hair, was tested for a part in a picture which called for grey hair. He did not get the part, but the experience left him rather fancying himself with grey hair, and he rejoined the *Happy Hunting* company in that condition. And now, apparently, the male star of the show wants him to continue grey, while the female star insists that he buy some black dye and use it freely. Miss Ethel



Merman, the female star, denies this. "I haven't anything to do with it," she informed interviewers. "It's between the management and him. For all I care, he can appear bald-headed."

Well, I could mention some very fine bald-headed characters. Hair is not everything, as Absolom found out.

This is the time of year when Junior, not having to drink in any more knowledge till early in September, gets sent off to a summer camp for children at the seaside or in the mountains, and as a rule finds it most enjoyable. But apparently these camps have their disadvantages, as is indicated in a telegram

received recently by a father from his rustivating son.

"URGENT SEND FOOD PACKAGES," it read. "ALL THEY HAVE HERE IS BREAKFAST LUNCH AND SUPPER."

And even children who remain at home have their troubles. Kathleen van Horne (11) of Altoona, Pa., was out walking with her aunt one sunny morning not long ago and stepped on a manhole cover. It tipped up, precipitating her into the depths. They got her out eventually, and she was physically as fit as a fiddle, but she was in the sewer for quite a while. She must have felt as if she had been reading some recent American best-sellers.



Corona Inc.

By INEZ HOLDEN

THE man called Corona was a millionaire who, in order to save more money and evade some income tax, made himself into an incorporated company.

I encountered Corona Inc. in the Paris apartment of my friend Josephine Slidell, a journalist who tended to turn up in the hot spots of Europe to send home dispatches signed "A Trained Observer." But because Josephine seemed constitutionally incapable of observing anything I could not help wondering who had trained her.

One of the things Josephine had failed to observe was the fact that very rich people were nothing but a worry and an expense and therefore better avoided. Although I had observed this myself I considered it my duty to regard millionaires as being just as good as jockeys, bookmakers, clerks, bishops, politicians or anyone else. However, after meeting millionaire Corona Inc. I

abandoned this splendid democratic principle.

When I arrived in Josephine's apartment there was another guest—a girl called Stella who was very poor. This problem seemed to preoccupy all Stella's waking life—and no doubt her dreams as well. Millionaire Corona constantly came to call, between meals, to talk about the money he had, which interrupted Stella's monologues on the money she didn't have. Corona Inc. also explained, at length, some complicated scheme he had perfected for, metaphorically, swallowing down his overdraft while at the same time charging it up to his expense account. I was not quite clear about how this was done, partly from resistance to the subject and also because while he was talking I was thinking about how strange it was that he should have the same name as my typewriter. On the other hand if you said it twice it became a cigar.

However, a well-informed Frenchman told me later that Corona was neither a tobacco king nor a writing machine monopolist because, believing in sympathetic magic, Corona Inc. had only adopted this name supposing that if his real name was not known no one could hurt him. This was irrational, since pain for Corona meant parting with money and no one could have made him do that whether they knew his real name or not.

The same Frenchman told me too that I was mistaken in thinking Corona a millionaire, because he was in fact a billionaire.

We found that we could usually get rid of Corona by suggesting that we should go to a restaurant, but if he did land up with us at supper time, in public, he would assume an air of melancholy regret when the bill came and say "Alas, I only have a very large note with me."

The well-informed Frenchman finally got tired of this and announced "I can change it."

"But it is a very large note indeed," Corona said. "Colossal."

"All the same I can change it," the Frenchman answered.

Corona went through the comedy of searching his pockets then, sighing deeply, he said that after all he had lost the *gros billet*. I knew Corona as a man not capable of losing a sum of money, but my psychologically



short-sighted friend Josephine sympathized with him.

The Frenchman said nothing, because he was too angry for words. Although Corona Inc. had seen fit to adopt the paraphernalia of poverty he also played a small part in the pantomime of wealth. He stayed in a suite of rooms in an expensive hotel and he had a long-bodied car with diagonal lights, like distressing red eyes, in the back of its head.

Nevertheless Corona turned up one evening on foot to take Stella to a party to which they had both been invited, and although Stella was in full evening dress they made their way, walking and talking, towards the Métro.

Josephine was surprised when they both told her that they found they had a great deal in common. Josephine had not noticed the similarities between Stella and Corona which already seemed to me so glaringly obvious. Neither Corona nor Stella ever carried any money on them, they avoided all unheralded callers for fear of being asked for money, and also they both talked about money all the time. Indeed Corona's millions and Stella's penury

made of them two people with but a single thought. Money.

When we decided to go to the South of France for a holiday Corona Inc. said that he would drive us all down in his high-powered car. I declined this grandiose offer not only because my tolerance to meanness, both in the physiological and psychological sense, was very low, but also because I suspected that Corona might ask us to contribute towards the cost of his petrol.

Later, on the Riviera, Josephine remarked that it must have been my second sight which had prompted me to make the cheaper journey alone by train. Naturally I had no second sight, nor did I need any, because I could tell by my first sight that Corona would expect Josephine to pay not only her own share of the petrol but penniless Stella's share as well.

It was about this time that Corona and Stella decided to get married.

Soon Josephine was believing, either from sentiment or short-sightedness or both, that billionaire Corona was changing for the better.

"He has loosened up quite a bit already," she said. "Who knows but

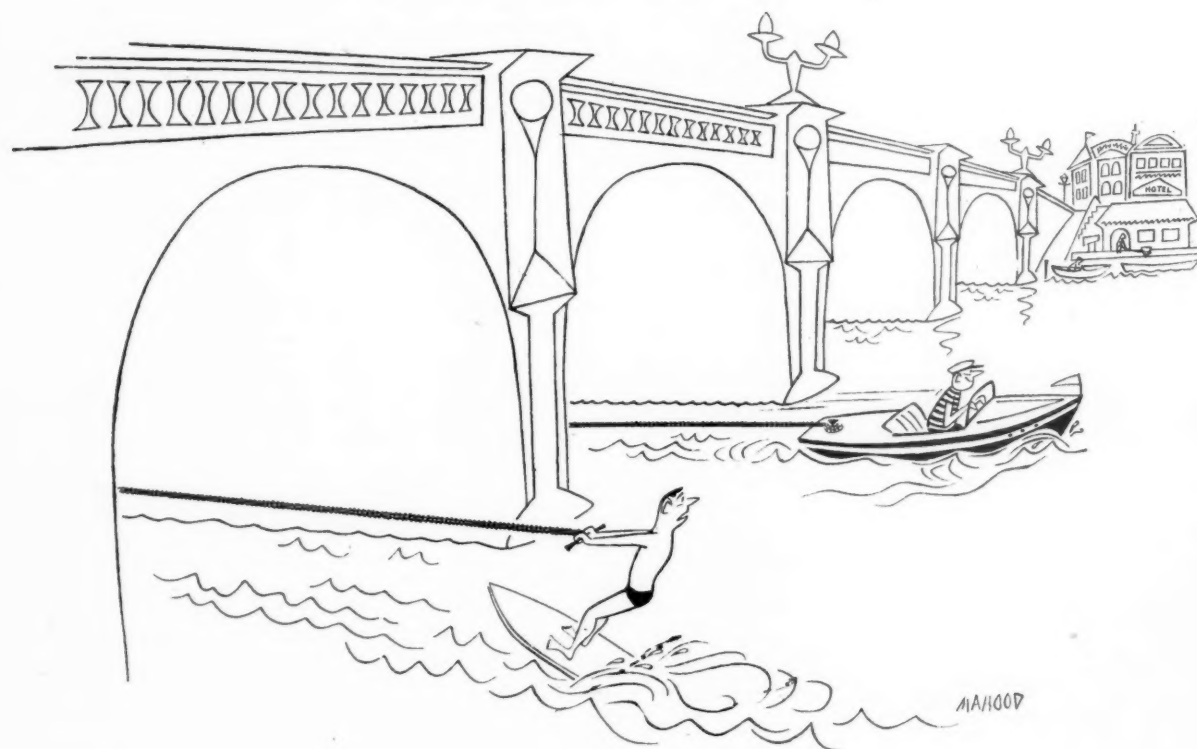
what he might come to learn in time that a man must pay?"

I answered that I knew, for one, that he would not.

Josephine then told me that on the eve of the wedding Corona Inc. had gone round to the pension where Stella was staying. "With dozens of flowers for her," Josephine said. "Literally as many as he could carry."

I thought how odd it was that I should have walked up from the beach with the trained observer Josephine on that very eve of wedding and yet she had not noticed the billionaire Corona going round the streets picking up and carefully dusting the blooms which had survived the Battle of Flowers which had taken place that day.

After her marriage Stella also became a member of the incorporated company. Both Corona Inc. and Stella Corona Inc. continued to say they were out when they were in fear of being asked for money; both never had any money on them, both talked about money all the time. There was no change in this stable marriage of true financial minds. It was not a Fool's Paradise. For them it was far better. It was *Folie à Deux*.





Deadbeat Diary

By R. G. G. PRICE

AFTER the novels of John Wain, Kingsley Amis and Iris Murdoch we get the novels of Thomas Hinde and J. P. Donleavy and the plays of John Osborne. Movements become exaggerated. There have always been Literary Deadbeats, though the type has changed from generation to generation. At the moment it is spectacularly unshaven, anti-political, anti-cultural, a sad decline from the intellectual athleticism of the scruffy heroes of even a few years ago. Already next year's novelists are hard at it, their diaries filled with careful sleaziness:—

Sunday. Wrote skeleton notes for Chapter 10 before meeting Irma at The Grapes. Grandfather keeps interfering. When he was a Failure he used to lie on

his bed reading Italian and Russian and then slouch off to art galleries or drinks with biologists. He won't see that we're living in a new world where failure's a whole-time job. He wants me to live in a boathouse in Majorca working on a translation of some very long Silver Latin poem that I never intend to finish and drinking red wine with Lesbians and making technical jokes about Rumanian painters. He's as phony as a Fabian. When I came—come—home from a booze-up last night he tried to be sympathetic. I told him what I thought of a Failure as does his boozing in the Athenæum. He tried to excuse himself by saying Publishing gave him the opportunity of blasting promise. We had been swigging a paregoric drink Les and Spotty make in

their copper and when I let grandfather have a lungful of my breath he couldn't even get out one of his cracks about vintages.

Rifled Irma's handbag at The Grapes and stood her a port-type Kup. Stew was at me to join the Klan. They've got a Resolution coming up about widening the ambit to include Poles. Irma wanted me to go home with her and get darned up ready for going after the job to-morrow. I said I'd come if she'd lend me five pounds.

That Ginger Man from Dublin came in and hit a lot of the drinkers and Irma went off with him. He'll never make a Failure. He *bustles* about towns so. Larry came in. He was on the swear. He's got a sweet tooth and Jimmy Porter won't let him have credit. He says



Jimmy's hell to the customers. I laughed at him. Ever since I failed finals in Mediæval Economic History due to Jim Dixon's lectures I've got a kick out of other blokes' troubles. Larry's got a scheme for breaking into the Porters' stall and stocking up on sweets. I might drop a word to the cops. I might at that.

Monday. Stayed in bed wondering how you dope greyhounds. We never learned no Practical Chemistry at school, only airy-fairy Theoretical. Mouth like unrinsed felt. Out of fag-papers so used leaves from Golden Sydney Cockerell *Aucassin et Nicolette*.

Tuesday. Stopped in bed.

Wednesday. Got up early and pinched an armful of papers along the street to take back to bed with me. Must get Irma to come and make the bed. Found oyster-shells in it again last night. See father is getting steamed up about the H-bomb. Well, the big bang can't come too soon for me. Father gets his little name into the capitalist press quite a nice lot these days. He wants more fraternity between Boilermakers and West Indians, does our Dad, and he doesn't want any naughty gun-play in Budapest and he wants to have fewer kids in each classroom. And above all he doesn't want his darling boy turning up at the Houses of Parliament bumming a free drink and a quid or two from his old pop.

Thursday. Didn't shave as the more the embarrassment caused to friends and relations the quicker the fork-out. It was different when one began shaving and it was a sign of manhood. One day Peter waited for me after Chapel and seeing a slight cut behind my ear quoted . . . Forget it! You've run out on your class, remember? Dream up a past that fits you better. How I first

shaved was in cold water at the sink. I used dripping for shaving soap and if it didn't give much of a lather what did in Council Causeway? Spent most of the day in bed doing old crosswords, filling in what I felt like filling in and not falling a sucker for the clues. Grandfather came in and talked against compulsory games until I showed him what they'd done for me by throwing him out.

Friday. The job I didn't go for Monday has been safely filled, I hear by the grapevine. In a way it's a pity I didn't take it for a day or two as it might have given me some exterior shots for Chapter 11. Went to Luigi's to celebrate. He turned nasty when I told him to chalk it up. Well, Grandfather was pacifist enough but he got trimmed of some toes fighting for Asquith's England and father pushed himself into the front line in Spain and still has a few bits of ironmongery in his guts, but the heir to the family glories prefers to fight in his own wars. When I showed my razor Luigi tossed me a couple of pound notes, and some film

people who were subjecting the concept of commitment to rigorous analysis at the espresso end of the bar moved smoothly out into the street.

Went to The Grapes and when I told Irma I was broke she stood me a few beers. Letter from father about Old Age Pensions but not enclosing a nice fat slice of his M.P.'s salary, oh, dear no. How bogus can you get?

Saturday. Stayed in bed until it was time for the party at Irma's. She had overlooked my invite as her less presentable friends weren't wanted. Her mother from the hard-tennis-court country was coming to look at the natives. Oo-la-la! Her mother who would look down her nose at a writ. Her mother who could never remember what it's like to share a kitchen sink with four Irish families and get coal-dust on your birthday cake and be jeered at in the street because your old man has been sacked from the Salvation Army for hocking the tambourines—as I've managed to. I got plenty of material for Chapter 12 to-night and do I mean plenty!

The Proper Study

SEATED before her window Mrs. Jones Described the passers-by in ringing tones. "Look," she would say, "the girl at Number Three Has brought her latest boy-friend home to tea; And, see, the woman at the upstairs flat Has bought herself another summer hat." Her daughter Daphne, filled with deep disgust, Expostulated "Mother, really must You pry upon the neighbours? Don't you know Gossip is idle, empty-minded, low?" And Mrs. Jones would murmur "Fancy, dear! There's Mr. Thompson going for his beer."

Daphne, an earnest girl of twenty-three, Read Sociology for her degree And every Saturday she would repair, Armed with her tutor's latest questionnaire, To knock on doors, demanding "Are you wed? Have you a child? A car? A double bed?" Poor Mrs. Jones would remonstrate each week, "Daphne, I wonder how you have the cheek. And then to call me nose!" Daphne sighed. "Oh, will you never understand?" she cried. "Mere curiosity is one thing, Mother: Social Analysis is quite another."

W. S. SLATER

Candidus Meets a Duke

By LORD KINROSS

CANDIDUS has been sampling the holiday pleasures of Britain.

I drove him, one week-end, to Clacton-on-Sea. Here we came upon an immense enclosure, fenced off from the sea and the road and the golf links by an insuperable barrier of concrete posts and steel-mesh netting.

"This is a concentration camp?" he asked in surprise.

"No. A holiday camp."

"But the holidaymakers are not allowed out of it?"

"They don't want to get out of it. The wire is to stop other holidaymakers getting into it."

"It is then a very exclusive camp?"

"Very. A luxury camp. For seven thousand people only."

I contrived nevertheless to get Candidus into it. He stood at first undecided beneath a signpost, offering him the rival attractions of the Sun Terrace, the Launderette or the Ironing Room, the Skating Rink or the Continental Lounge, the Infants' Feeding Centre or the Pram Hiring Store, the

Jolly Roger or the Reception. Undecided still, he strolled towards the wire, where I found him standing, looking wistfully through it towards the inaccessible sea. Presently, however, a brisk Publicity Officer took him in charge.

"Come along with me," he said. "We're just electing the house committees. Then there'll be Fun and Games on the Green. Then a March Past."

He vanished, and I caught glimpses of him, at intervals during the day, disporting himself amid a galaxy of high-heeled, bare-legged starlets, with provocative red hearts sewn on provocative bosoms.

The Publicity Man reappeared with him late in the evening. "Come along," he said to me. "We've just got time for a quickie with the *hoi polloi*." And we were soon sitting over nice warm beers in a half-timbered hall called the Pig and Whistle.

Candidus looked pleased with himself. "I met the Girl with the Best Cared-for

Complexion," he said. "A charming girl. More beautiful even than Cunc-gonda. Also," he added with some smugness, "there seems a very good chance that I shall be elected Mr. Butlin's Personality of the Week."

When finally I lured him away from Clacton we drove away westwards, into the shires. Here we came to a park with a fence hardly lower, though distinctly less forbidding, than Mr. Butlin's.

"This is another holiday resort?" Candidus asked.

"Yes. A stately home."

"A home run by the State, for the assistance of its underprivileged citizens?"

"No. A home run by a duke for the assistance of his over-privileged family. It is called Woburn Abbey."

"Ah!" he exclaimed with satisfaction.

"A religious institution."

"Alas! no longer."

"I understand. Like that stately one we visited in Yorkshire, where I took a bath in a Chippendale bathroom.





Nostell Priory, was it? Belonging to a saint."

"Well, to a lord named after a saint. Lord St. Oswald."

"And this fence. It is to keep people out or in?"

"To keep animals in. This duke keeps bison and stags. Also wallabies."

I indicated a notice reading "Animals are breeding. Please keep to the roads and footpaths."

"Very proper," approved Candidus. "We must respect their privacy. Mr. Butlin certainly has no bison, and no wallabies. Otherwise," he added, looking around him, "this place of entertainment seems to provide somewhat similar amenities: boating ponds, a Pets' Corner, a children's playground, with play-pens and roundabouts and swings—though I observe none of those immovable bicycles which the children were riding at Clacton."

"You will observe, however, there in the background, a mansion."

On the steps of this mansion the Duke of Bedford received us. "I'm sorry about all this muck," he said, as we tripped through a network of wires and cables and cylindrical lamps. "We've been lighting up the place and setting it to words and music. *Son et Lumière*, they call it. I call it Light and Sound."

"This then is a kind of film set?" Candidus whispered to me.

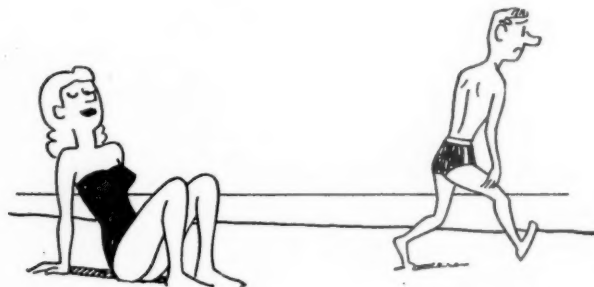
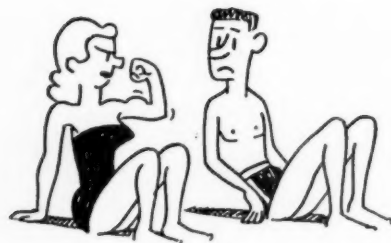
"If you like to put it that way, yes. A stately one."

"We'd better get going," the Duke said, "before the half-crowners come. These pictures are awful muck too. A small boy turned a fire hydrant on that one—luckily. I was able to get it cleaned on the insurance. I hope someone does it again. There are some better ones upstairs."

Upstairs the Duke took us the round

of his ancestors. "Merchants, they liked to be called. Smugglers they were, really . . . One of them spoke Spanish, so did well for himself when the King of Spain got washed up here . . . Charles II chopped that one's head off, so William and Mary made his father a duke, to make up for it. Not that it did *him* much good . . . This woman was involved in the Overbury murders: Jane Russell and Marilyn Monroe had nothing on her for looks . . . This one wasn't so hot, as far as her morals went . . . He married beneath him. A good thing too, so I tell my sons. I hope they'll bring in some common blood, some guts. . . . She kept poking her nose into politics . . . He kept eight ladies in a block of flats near the Albert Hall . . . She was rather an old bag . . . He was a selfish, spoilt old sot . . . He was bumped off by his valet . . . She ran a hospital, where she was always chopping people up. My grandfather gave her a skating-rink in London for her birthday. But when she'd won all the skating medals she took to flying, and disappeared. This is her room: frightful taste, as you see. The people love it."

Candidus declared himself deeply impressed by the beauty of everything: by a large double bed ("Charles II slept in it. Also Queen Victoria. Separately, of course"); by the pictures ("That's a Van Dyck. That's a copy. Those really are Canalettos. Those are phonies—but they may be Van Dycks to-morrow. You never know"); by the wax models wearing the Duke's and the Duchess's robes ("Shop window stuff. We tried to get properly done by Madame Tussaud's, but they wouldn't play"); by the Sèvres dinner service ("We had a terrific washing-up session in the stables"). Especially was he impressed by the "brass" on the dining-room table.



AAGAARD—

"Gold," corrected the Duke. "Let's skip the silver—we call it the Mappin and Webb room—and have a drink. Would you like me to sign you a guide-book? I usually do that at the end, for an extra half-crown, when their appetites are whetted."

Clutching the precious volume, together with a book by the Duke's father entitled *The Road to Real Success* and marked "reduced to 2s. 6d.", Candidus drank a gin-and-tonic, then proceeded to luncheon, where he sat between two duchesses, one being the mother-in-law of the Duke. He expressed some disappointment that the public was not admitted to watch them all eat.

"That's quite an idea," said the Duke. "It might be arranged."

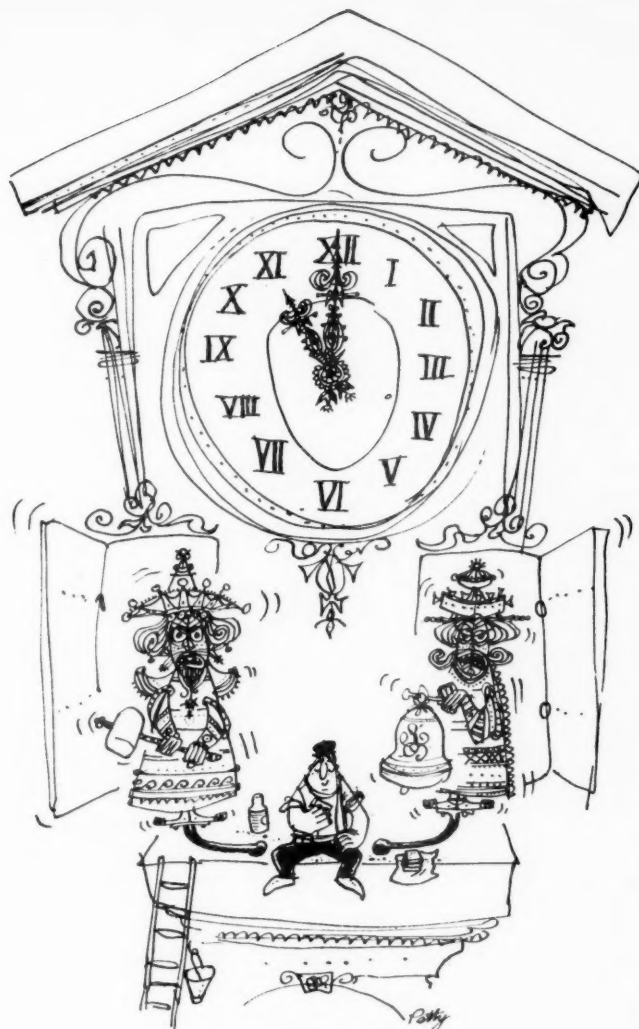
Afterwards he left for London for a TV rehearsal, and his Duchess conducted us around the gardens. "This is where we put up the tent for the ball," she said. "It looked smashing."

She showed us the sculpture gallery, where teas were served; the maze, where visitors were lost; the Chinese Dairy, where plants were sold. We must now turn back, she said, or we should run into the *hoi polloi*. If Candidus would care to return on Monday he would see a rally of traction engines. If he had been here the other day he would have seen a queen elected.

"A queen?" His eyes lit up. "Your dukes then elect your queens?"

"She was a Dairy Queen," the Duchess said. "We had twenty-eight dairymaids, from all over England, here for the week-end. There was some talk of having nudists. But it looks as though they've fallen through."

As we drove away, Candidus expressed his deep gratification at the visit. "That Duke and Duchess," he said. "They are gracious, business-like people. I should like them, however, to meet Mr. Butlin. He is a man with a great sense of order. Compared to Clacton, Woburn Abbey is just a little haphazard. There should be ladies and gentlemen in blazers, to organize the visitors into teams. There should be a continuous programme of ducal radio, relayed to all parts of the grounds. There should be more competitions—one, let us say, for the Most Glamorous Grandmother of Great Britain. That other duchess would certainly win it.



There should be the Duke of Bedford's Personality of the Week. There should also, I think, be starlets. Starlets," he added wistfully, "with red hearts on their breasts."

Soon we were driving through the neighbouring gates of Whipsnade. Candidus was studying a map of the Zoological Park. Suddenly he remarked, with satisfaction: "There are Dukes in here too."

"I think not."

"Certainly. Here marked on the map are the Lion Pit, the Bison Hill, the Hippo Ponds, the Gibbon Island, the Panda Tree and the Wolf Wood. Here are Gents, and here, if we turn to the right, are Dukes—just at the end of Dukes Avenue."

We reached the spot thus marked on the map. But, to Candidus's disappointment, there was not a duke to be seen. Nor, for that matter, was there a Hippo or a Gibbon or a Panda or a Wolf.

"Charles Chaplin's *A King in New York* . . . Is it as anti-American as has been rumoured? No. Reports Cholmondeley: 'Chaplin himself says nothing that could be construed as anti-American in the film. Any jibes at the American way of life have been put into the mouth of 11-year-old Michael Chaplin, his son.' (Sample dialogue: 'If you don't think as they think—you won't get a passport.') Will that send up Mr. Dulles's blood pressure? I hardly think so."

Sunday Express

Come to that, will it send up the audience's?

Fashion at the Palazzo Pitti

By ALISON ADBURGHAM

IT is not fair to Florence to approach it from Rome by the *Rapido*. You get there too fast; the contrast is too sudden. Far better to save the 1,850-lira luxury surcharge and travel on the slowest stopper, so that you are thankful to arrive. And arrive after dark, so that you cannot compare the brownish yellow-ochre of Florence, its treeless dustiness, with the fresh pink and cypress green of Rome. Rome may have been hot, but with a sparkling heat, not this all-over heaviness, this hateful dry wind. Rome may have been noisy; but it was tranquil compared with the insufferable din of Florence. Oh, for a modern Medici to banish motor scooters from this noise-ruined city!

Yet all can be saved if you take a *carozza* instead of a taxi. There are just as many of them, and in these over-peopled streets they travel just as fast. Once you have stepped up into a *carozza* you are in the Florence of before the combustion engine. It cannot be scientifically explained, but it is a fact that as you bowl along under your fringed canopy you hear no noise but the rumble of your wheels and the clatter of your horses' hooves. The air is fresh upon your face, and you look without distraction down narrow streets to distant churches, through gateways to cool courtyards, down colonnades to campaniles. Everything now enchants.

Thus, if it is by *carozza* that you arrive at the Palazzo Pitti for the first fashion show of the *Centro di Firenze per la Moda Italiana*, you are in a mood

for elegance; and elegant enough seem the young guardsmen, their hands upon their sword-hilts. A less favourable portent is the Pitti cat, doing its washing in the courtyard—a hopeless task without modern detergents, for its coat is of shabby ermine, yellowing in patches, a hand-down from more prosperous relatives. It seems the thinnest cat in Christendom until you have seen other Florentine cats. Then you know that when a Florentine cat is black it looks like a sewing-machine; when it is grey it is a rangy grimalkin, all ribs and eyes.

The next portent at the Pitti is the crimson carpet on the staircase. This smells of dust as though just dragged down from an attic for the fashion week. Two flights bring you to an ante-room, as in a provincial town hall. A trestle table, which in the town hall would hold Ministry of Health leaflets, holds Press Information. Another ante-room is turned into a bar by having its trestle table covered with a white cloth. Two primitive pieces of apparatus look like paraffin heating stoves but give out a rush of luke-warm air, so are presumably intended to cool, not heat. The unpolished board floor is littered by the end of the evening shows (about 12.45 a.m.) with trodden cigarette ends. None of this makes for elegance. Neither does the bar make for gaiety; for it serves iced tea, coffee, orange squash, or Campari at the beginning; by the interval it is serving the first three; by the end it is serving warm squash.

Warm squash also describes the

throng of buyers and Press, the considerable contingent from Germany being one of the factors weighing against chic. The Italians themselves, however, are fresh and charming, while the American representation is, as always, well-dressed. A few personalities add a touch of drama: for instance, Madame Irene Brin, who has surged down from Rome in the Cadillac which was, in Rome, too big to negotiate the entrance to the Excelsior Hotel, and which in Florence seems a space ship lost for space. Madame Brin owns two modern art galleries, represents some half dozen Italian papers as well as *Harper's Bazaar*, and is intensely elegant: witness the waistless sack (red with white penny spots) drooping off the beautifully sloping shoulders; or the white evening dress draped luxuriantly and languidly from one big embosomed rose.

Almost equally elegant is Mr. Hans Schneider, fashion director of Marks & Spencer. He is the contemporary Lord Bristol to Continental hoteliers, for he travels Europe with an entourage and wherever he goes hospitality is lavish. The entourage is selected from his staff of a hundred designers, the largest designing staff in the world. They are admitted to the dress shows because they buy models. "And when you buy a model, Mr. Schneider, do you insist on the exclusive copying rights?" "Oh, no, that is the other buyers' worry, not ours!" And one sees his point. Not that the resulting dresses on the rails are recognizable in their simplified form; but if you walk round a Marks & Spencer with Mr. Schneider he will point out details such as a Fontana collar, a Gattinoni group of pleats, a Simonetta treatment of a yoke. Models are bought for a new thought, a notion—and Italy, these days, is the happiest hunting ground for fresh ideas.

The hunting ground is concentrated in Florence through the initiative of Signor Giorgini, who at one time was connected with several American stores. Realizing that American buyers, automatic travellers though they be, could not be expected to go to Milan, Turin, Rome and Florence for fashions twice a year, he decided to make Florence the fashion centre for all Italy. The first show was held in his private house in



1951. Soon the entrants, which now include most of the Roman couture houses, were so many that the Palazzo Pitti became the endroito. At these autumn collections just shown, thirty fashion houses were represented, only three being Florentine: Emilio, Guidi, and Valditivere, this last being a *boutique*.

It is the Marchese Emilio Pucci who is Florentine fashion. This dragonfly of a man, brilliant, darting, questing, has his workrooms in his private house hung with Florentine banners, upholds the artistic traditions of his city, and likes to call himself a Florentine artisan. His printed silks and cottons, made into extravagant play clothes, have Tuscan designs and colouring. For this autumn he has a series of *chasseur* costumes, which were shown by models carrying sporting guns—timidly, as men carry babies. His cocktail and evening dresses are harem skirted, and there was a bright yellow harem trouser-dress. Perhaps this was sheer devilment, for it was a garment of unprecedented ugliness. More simply ugly were his loose, unbelted flannel dresses, hanging straight from the shoulders.

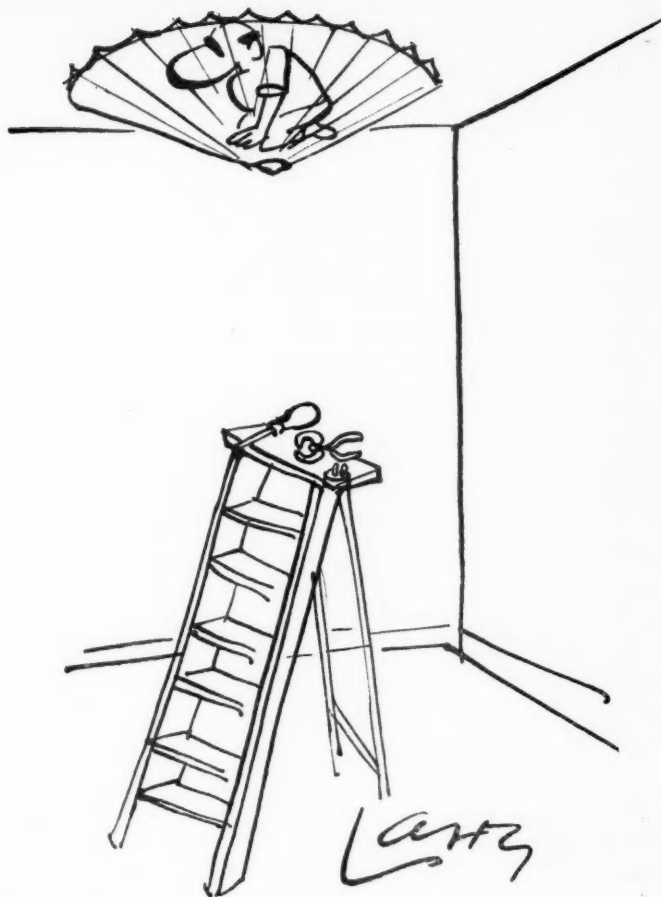
The ugly can be elegant; the vulgar never. And vulgarity nearly always begins with sequins. When sequins fall into the wrong hands, all appears to be lost and there is no saying what may happen. It is possible, however, to say what *did* happen in the collections of Antonelli of Rome and Veneziani of Milan: for instance, a chiffon dress whose transparent bodice had a brassière fitment entirely constructed of sequins; and a mermaid dress, scaled with black sequins, its train trimmed with ermine tails. Indeed, if vulgarity begins with sequins, it carries on with ermine tails. And after ermine tails comes white satin—as demonstrated by a white satin gown, its bust outlined with diamanté. This distasteful display concluded with a model called *The Seven Temptations of a Woman in Love*: seven chiffon skirts of different colours, discarded one by one as the model walked down the rostrum, the final skirt being called, we need hardly say, *Disillusion*.

Let us, however, draw a veil—seven good thick calico veils—over this embarrassing picture, and consider the fashions shown in Florence as a whole. Discounting the Roman houses of Carosa, Capucci, Fabiani, and Simonetta,

the couture was not outstanding. These Roman houses showed the influence of Paris, in particular that of Balenciaga and de Givenchy. That is well. For Italian couture is not in a position to challenge Paris in setting the line and the trend. What it does do is to add a dash of spirited individuality, a liveliness of interpretation. Individuality is even more apparent in the boutique collections, which also made manifest a pride and perfection of craftsmanship. Hand-loomed materials, woven at the rate of only ten centimetres a day, made casual skirts; hand-printed tweeds and woollens made simple but distinctive dresses; Cimabue satins, minutely pleated or brilliantly embroidered, made evening dresses; tulle was embroidered with crystal raindrops. From Adria of Milan were skirts with coloured stones woven into the fabric, looking like the glowing gowns in Renaissance paintings. Myrica

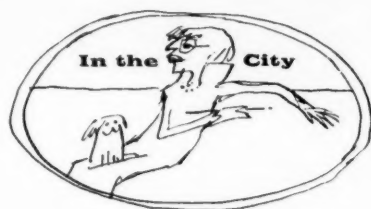
of Rome continues her "tight-rope balance between peasant art and highly cerebral creation": hand-loomed skirts with huge fur pockets; others with lamb-skin details; loden skirts with wool-lace crochet; kid-skin skirts with brass tacks at the seams; an Infanta hoop of wool and burlap; prints which look like tapestries. At the beginning of this collection one of the models carried in her arms an adult sheep, newly shorn and freshly shampooed, looking as stupid as only a sheep can look—a symbol, perhaps, of peasant art, but hardly of *highly cerebral creation*.

From the cat in the courtyard to the sheep in the Palazzo, fashion is a little confusing in Florence. But if there is naïveté, there is also spontaneity, vitality, and individuality. And if, as Fabiani said in Rome, *fashion is no longer in fashion*, individuality must be sought and appreciated, or clothes will become just clothes.





"No sign of Altrincham, m' lords."



Cradle-to-Grave Warning

THERE is a certain advertisement, issued by a private insurance business, that never fails to catch my eye and give me the shudders. It shows the progress of a man's thoughts over the decades on the subject of pensions. The young man is only faintly interested, but as the years roll on—and as the artist slips in more telling lines to indicate the ravages of time, the crows' feet, the furrows in the brow, and those tell-tale haversacks under the eyes—our fading hero becomes more and more oppressed by intimations of penurious retirement. He wishes he had made adequate provision . . . he *dreads* the future.

Clearly the gentleman depicted is not a politician. Our politicians, most of them in middle age or beyond it, don't have to worry about such trifles: at any moment they can vote themselves an increase in pay or an entirely new pensions scheme, or both. And, of course, they do not have to lose any sleep over the actuarial niceties of their legislation. The youth of the nation will have plenty of time to make the necessary calculations.

It seems pretty certain that figger and better pensions will figure prominently in the next election manifestoes—of both major parties. Labour has already put most of its insurance cards on the table, the Conservatives will do so before long, and the picture of the future, whatever its colour, will certainly appear bright to electors in the influential over-forty class.

Beveridge was far too timid, it seems, in his famous Report (the basis for the National Insurance Act of 1946). He wanted his pensions scheme to operate on sound business principles and with a minimum of assistance from State subsidies and the inflationary spiral. (Lord Beveridge said the other day that he cannot afford to live as long as he had intended, so he too may change his mind about the desirability of economic prudence.) But the pensions planners of to-day have no intention of submitting to the sound business principles of the life assurance offices. They propose

to finance their schemes by taxation and inflation, and therefore by making heavy drafts on the productivity of the rising generations.

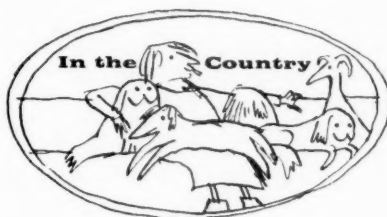
Even now, under the modest pension scheme of the National Insurance Act, the contributions paid by and on behalf of present pensioners and the vast majority of insured persons represent only a fraction of the ultimate *cost* of their pensions. I am quoting from a useful booklet recently issued by the Life Officers' Association and the Associated Scottish Life Offices: it goes on to show that "for a married man who retired at age sixty-five in 1954, after being a contributor since . . . 1926, the total amount of contributions . . . represented less than one-tenth of the

value of the pension payable to him and his wife." The balance is, of course, subsidy. The subsidy will grow to about £500 millions a year by 1979, to some astronomical figure if the grandiose plans of the Labour Party become practical politics. So don't hope for too much in the way of tax relief.

A social revolution based on incessant wage claims and inflation suits the purse of the working population. Labour's plan to boost pensions is merely a device to ensure that the revolution continues painlessly into retirement. It is a scheme devised by people who know that their own bargaining power cannot last for ever. And, of course, it is a device to limit the bargaining power of the young.

MAMMON

* * *



Carried Forward

DURING the last few weeks, while the rest of England has been bullied by bus-drivers who won't drive buses unless they get higher pay, this remote backwater has had another sort of problem. We've been trying to persuade a man to stop working for us for nothing. And we have failed.

Thirty years ago the carrier was an indispensable part of country life; there was little public transport, few people owned cars, and a scattered community like this depended very much on people like Dick Warren who collected stuff in his lorry from the station and dumped it at our door when he happened to be passing our way. It was all very haphazard but it worked. Warren's territory was vast; his old lorry would cover a hundred miles a day and would be trundling the lanes at all hours, delivering anything from live day-old chicks to cans of paraffin. And, of course, since the carrier called on everybody, he was our own unexpurgated newspaper and gossip sheet too. As I say, we depend on him.

But Warren was always eccentric. He would never take any cash if you offered to pay him as he handed you your parcels. He'd always say "Leave it to next time. I'll put it down." Many of us often used to wonder how much we owed Warren. We never

discovered because we never received a bill. He'd been driving his old lorry into my farmyard every week for the last twenty years. Like many people, I've often found myself leaving stuff at the station which could have gone in the boot merely because I didn't want to hurt old Warren's feelings and do him out of a job. On the other hand, I often wondered what the bill would look like when he did produce it. I knew that my neighbours too had been in Warren's debt for as long as I had. So last week a few of us formed a strike committee and told Warren that he couldn't go on carrying for us unless he produced our bills. The old man looked miserable and ashamed as though he'd been caught stealing from us. Eventually he confessed that he couldn't give us any bills since he "hadn't kept in tally."

"Do you mean to say you've never kept any accounts?" I asked him.

"I did to start with but when I realized I'd been putting stuff down to you that I ought to have charged to the vicar I got discouraged with the figures so I gave 'em up."

Warren got into his lorry and, saying that he'd got a lot of wire-netting to deliver, asked if he could go.

"When you tell me what you've used for money these last twenty years," I demanded.

"Could never figure it, sir," he answered.

"But how have you paid your rent, groceries—and petrol?"

"I've lived on tick too. It saves a lot of figuring. Pity others don't do the same."

I couldn't think of an answer. Warren drove off. He obviously adores his lorry—so we've called our strike off.

RONALD DUNCAN



criticism

BOOKING OFFICE

"The Count"

The Sea Dreamer: A Definitive Biography of Joseph Conrad. Gérard Jean-Aubry. Allen & Unwin, 25/-

THIS is the centenary year of Joseph Conrad's birth and it is appropriate that a Life of him should appear; but why M. Jean-Aubry's book, first published in 1947 as *Vie de Conrad*, should be dished up as *The Sea Dreamer: a Definitive Biography* is hard to understand. What is a "Sea Dreamer," one asks oneself? Something like a Sea Lawyer? The fact is that the phrase exemplifies the very worst rubbish talked about Conrad's writing. It is calculated to perpetuate all the misunderstandings that have long obstructed his path in being accepted as a great writer.

The somewhat uninspired translation is American, and such a title may have been considered necessary to sell the book transatlantically. It is to be regretted that the English publishers did not rebel against such a piece of claptrap. As to it being "definitive," we learn from it no more than the bare facts of Conrad's extremely active life. So far as that goes, the late M. Jean-Aubry has done the job very well. He knew Conrad personally and he writes with knowledge and sympathy; but he writes in the tone of the best sort of obituary notice. This may still be necessary owing to the survival of relations and others whose feelings must be considered; but when you read of Conrad's career it is clear that here is no more than a shadow of a "definitive" biography.

Conrad (whose surname, Korzeniowski, was consistently misspelt in innumerable ship's certificates) came of a family of Polish minor gentry, established in Russia. When Conrad was still a child his father was sent into exile for political activities, where he and his wife died as a result of their discomforts and sufferings. The boy was therefore brought up by an uncle, a sympathetic character, who lived in Austrian Poland.

At the age of seventeen he conceived

the idea—staggering in its eccentricity to his relations—of wishing to go to sea. This desire seems chiefly to have been the result of reading novels by Captain Marryat. For a true Pole, the Russian and German navies were out of the question, owing to the treatment of the Polish minorities by the governments of those countries. Austrian rule was more liberal, Poles rising to high rank in the Austro-Hungarian Services. All the



same, the Imperial and Royal Navy was not what Conrad required.

After a year as an ordinary seaman in French vessels, he came to England, learnt the language, and in due course obtained a Master Mariner's certificate. This was his vocation for fifteen years or more. There was nothing whatever "bogus" about his seamanship. Without exception he received high commendation, though not specially popular among his *confrères*, who called him "The Count." He was as happy at sea as a man of his temperament could be happy anywhere. He took to writing in his late thirties, a change accomplished in the same spirit as his original decision to become a sailor.

But because Conrad's early career was engrossed with the sea, and because he

wrote several excellent books in which the sea and ships provide a background, he is not—how often must it be emphasized?—primarily a writer about the sea. *Under Western Eyes* is about Russian revolutionaries in Geneva, *The Secret Agent* about spies and terrorists in London, *Almayer's Folly* and *An Outcast of the Islands* about Malaya, *Heart of Darkness* and *An Outpost of Progress* about Africa, *The Arrow of Gold* about the Carlist War in Spain, *Nostromo* about South America . . . not to mention stories like *The Duel* that deal with the Napoleonic wars or such extraneous subjects.

Some critics speak of *Under Western Eyes* and *The Secret Agent* as artificial and contrived: *tours de force* that lack the conviction of "real life." I could not disagree more cordially. They seem to me probably the best things Conrad wrote, and to all who have not read those books I recommend them heartily. The elements of political intrigue thus examined are, incidentally, to be found equally in, say, *Almayer's Folly*, though less obvious to the view is the exotic oriental setting.

Conrad's approach is to survey life in a detached, sardonic spirit, taking pleasure in the ironies of existence. The occasional oddities of phrase he employs give him individuality and add force to his style. It is astonishing to find a congenitally slipshod writer like H. G. Wells writing to him and saying he lacks "skill" as a novelist (though otherwise praising him), and Arnold Bennett noting that he wrote "in my own [manner] on a grander scale." When Conrad met Henry James, with whom he was in great sympathy, they talked French together: an attractive picture.

ANTHONY POWELL

Island Home

Bitter Lemons. Lawrence Durrell. *Faber*, 16/-

In 1953 Mr. Durrell bought a crumbling house in a hill village in Cyprus, and was immediately accepted by neighbours astonished that he spoke Greek, loved wine (at 6d. a litre), and was not a

"grand gentleman." For the last two years of his stay the Cyprus Government drew on his knowledge by making him its Press Adviser.

His book is as sad as it is charming and funny. In his sketches of a blissfully convivial village his friends, characters to a man, come to life splendidly. But all the time Enosis was rumbling, and even when the shooting began it was with an Irish paradox of fondness for the British combined with a longing to be free, though this meant ruin. He saw the faults of both sides, and his summing-up is extremely fair. For Sir John Harding he has nothing but praise, but he believes that an earlier promise of a democratic referendum would have gained a respite of at least fifteen years. E. O. D. K.

Disputed Barricade. Fitzroy Maclean. *Cape, 25/-*

No one in this country is better qualified to write about Tito than Brigadier Maclean, and he has given, against a background of Yugoslavian history, a portrait notably fair. He cannot hide his hero-worship for the Marshal, but he has painted him "warts and all." The British think of Tito to-day as a brave wartime ally; actually he was a thoroughpaced Communist revolutionary who saw the opportunity for a working-class uprising. Naturally it was directed against the Axis invaders, but it was directed equally against the royalist and reactionary elements in Yugoslavia. The fact that Tito, having attained power, so took to it that he ditched his former Russian sponsors has, in the current state of the world, endeared him to the West; but it is hardly evidence of political integrity.

Sir Fitzroy Maclean is quite objective about all this, but at the same time he presents his own view of Tito as brave fighter and charming comrade. Exhaustively documented, admirably organized and written with style and zest, this book is of unique value in its field.

B. A. Y.

Snared Nightingale. Geoffrey Trease. *Macmillan, 15/-*

This witty and urbane novel is set in the England of the 1470s, which had much in common with the England of the 1920s; a ruling class emancipated from morality remains secure while the lower orders adhere to the ancient ways. This decay from above is seen through the eyes of a young copyist in the ducal library of Urbino; by descent he is English, and a chain of unexpected deaths brings him a Marcher Earldom. Nicholas Bray, fearing the hostility of his heir presumptive, guards against poison and the stiletto. But in England even the fiercest dowagers avoid private war; ecclesiastical law is what nearly defeats him. In the end he triumphs over all his foes, and for good measure wins the affections of a beautiful lady. Mr. Trease has an ear for intelligent dialogue,

he can describe delightful landscapes, and his plot is full of unexpected turns. His charming tale should delight every class of reader, from the learned historian to the seeker after thrills. A. L. D.

A. E. Housman: A Divided Life. George L. Watson. *Hart-Davis, 25/-*

This biography contains enough new material to be worth reading, although it is full of phrases like "the mundane struggle," "dormant poetic faculties" and "the sudden effulgence of a meteor." Mr. Watson apparently regards Housman's lyrics and his scholarship as primarily an outlet for repressed homosexuality and he argues lengthily that hero-worship for an Oxford friend, held in check by the friend's normality, explains everything that is not explained by the shock of the Wilde trial.

He tries too hard to dramatize Housman's austerity; but he gives a coherent account of his life. He does not realize that to a scholar his place in the history of scholarship can be of intense importance, and he has not understood the references to Bentley in A. S. F. Gow's *Life*. You don't become the greatest living Latinist simply from fear of emotion and love of aridity. Mr. Watson seems to feel that if only Housman could have let himself go in the moonlight he would have deserted the textual criticism of Manilius for something nearer to the classical activities of Gilbert Murray.

R. C. G. P.



AT THE GALLERY

English Painting for Canada

FOR the space of ten days (August 16-25) the National Gallery of Canada is making a debut at the Tate Gallery with an impressive array of loaned pictures entitled "British Painting in the Eighteenth Century," subsequently to be shown in North America.

The pictures are from many sources, headed by the Queen, and include the National and Tate Galleries, several other museums and a number of generous-minded private collectors in this country. On arrival in Canada the show will be further enriched by nineteen more paintings owned by collectors and museums in the United States.

At a time when public attention is often captured by the staggering prices paid for French bourgeois art of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the considerable achievement of Britain in an earlier age of aristocratic elegance has lapsed into undeserved neglect. This comprehensive show (for which all concerned, including the British Council, deserve praise) should do much to restore the balance. Elegance combined with human charm were surely never better rendered than by Gainsborough, and here he is well represented by his "Earl of Bristol," his portrait of his wife, and a smaller early portrait of a figure in a tricorne hat, "Mr. Plamping." For a

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CUSTOMS
DOUANE



"Bonjour tristesse!"

more majestic though not ungenial approach Reynolds is hard to surpass, and his "Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire and her daughter" (from Chatsworth) is a happy choice, while of Hogarth, generally standing for the tougher side of eighteenth-century life, there is *inter alia* his self-portrait with pug (National Gallery), a version of "The Beggars' Opera," and a particular plum, his sketch for a masked ball "The Wantage Assembly." Three Wilsons, "Lake Albano," "Mount Snowdon" and "Croome Court," show the range of this fine artist, while a small spirited Morland, and Stubbs' well-known "Gimcrack with Stable Lad and Groom on Newmarket Heath," provide a note of sporting life without which no show of English eighteenth-century life would be complete.

ON VIEW AT THE NATIONAL GALLERY. New acquisitions: "Juno discovering Jupiter with Io," by Lastman (gift of Mr. Weitzner of New York); "St. Clement," by Tiepolo.

ADRIAN DAINTRY



AT THE BALLET

Coppelia—Giselle
(SADLER'S WELLS THEATRE)

ELDERLY *balletomanes* with memories of Adeline Genée in the French two-act version of Delibes' *Coppelia* have been recalling nights at the Empire Theatre fifty years ago. The occasion of reminiscence has been the appearance in this most workmanlike and well-styled ballet of the young French dancer, Violette Verdy, as a guest in the *Ranibet Ballet*. In her beauty of face and form, her fair colouring and her

lovely smile she strikingly resembles the great Edwardian ballerina. Her artistry is paramount and her vivacity enchanting. She is fortunate in appearing under Madame Rambert's auspices, for in recent years the work has lost much of its subtlety and suffered tiresome broadening of humour. From her memory of Ivanov's choreography Madame Rambert has restored many of his lost refinements and in particular the intricacies of the Dance of the Hours. It is once more a truly romantic ballet in which, in a spirit of lyrical comedy, character is expressed and developed by the pure medium of the dance.

Mlle. Verdy has the exquisite fragility of fairy invention and with the support of the regular Rambert company is at the heart of a revival which is balanced, sensitive and coherent. Norman Morrice as Dr. Coppélius, no longer a buffoon, has admirably caught the quiddity of the toymaker's essentially gentle though bewildered personality. As Swanhilda's village suitor Norman Dixon is a gallant and efficient partner to Mlle. Verdy.

Dresses designed by M. V. Doboujinsky echo in their gay colours and bucolic femininity the gaiety and high spirits of the ballet. The whole production is so outstanding that it deserves a really first-class orchestra in the pit.

Mlle. Verdy later made her début in the title-role of *Giselle*, long a test piece for ballerinas. It brought out the poetic

side of her talent, and she was at her best in the early scenes of love's awakening but throughout showed that the supreme exponents of the part have a challenger at the threshold.

Ann Horn's performance in the same part is most affecting. Her shy and tender Giselle is beautifully sincere and her torment of mind at discovering her lover's duplicity is truly poignant. Unlike many Giselles, that of Miss Horn is also completely satisfying as the spirit momentarily released from the grave. It ranks high among present-day interpretations. C. B. MORTLOCK

AT THE PLAY



Meet Me by Moonlight (ALDWYCH)

Yerma (ARTS)

How Can We Save Father?

(ROYAL COURT)

CRITICS were very stuffy with the pleasant trifle at the Aldwych (brought up from the Playhouse, Salisbury); they still believe that *Salad Days* (brought up from the Theatre Royal, Bristol) was launched on its three-year run by the partisan applause of cheer-leaders from the country, and a suspicion that something of the kind was afoot at this Aldwych first night upset them. Critics don't care for audiences to tell them what is entertaining: it could lead to redundancy.

Admittedly there are mistakes in *Meet*

Me by Moonlight. It is a mistake to have an opening duet performed hard on curtain rise by minor characters who then disappear for an act and a half; another to call your hero Cuttinghame, which can only come over as Cunningham with adenoids; it is something very like a mistake to make Miss Sophie Stewart sing. But the wages of such venial sins is not damnation. Marks must be awarded for using a Victorian setting for fun, instead of to frame madness and murder; for neat and workmanlike words to the old songs "by composers of the period." Isn't it rather ingenious, in this nostalgia-ridden age, to show an elderly Victorian aunt nostalgic for her own young days? And if no one has hitherto thought to show us the mysterious mechanics of the crinoline, and impress us quite emotionally with its charms when gracefully worn, can't we give Mr. Anthony Lesser another mark for that?

The play is a love-story of the simplest kind, but enlivened with little dramatic surprises, told in good and often amusing dialogue with a well-judged bulge of tongue in cheek, a harmless, cheerful affair, suitable for families of all ages and sizes, that—of course—won't make a ripple on the surface of theatre history. Mr. Michael Denison is amusingly pompous as a "boring, bleak, bombastic barrister," and Mr. Terence Dudley, who directs, knows exactly the weight of his material.

For an evening of maundering melancholy in pastoral Spanish half-light, *Yerma* is confidently recommended. No doubt the sufferings of a childless wife are keen, and the late Federico Garcia Lorca exercised some perception (for a member of the complementary sex) in isolating this anguish. But six scenes of empty wombs lamented are too much. We are sorry for Yerma, but we wish she would shut up about it. There is the impression of a baffle between the original and the translation, and some of the epigrams sound like parodies of Great Thoughts. One critic points out that the Lorca who wrote "*A las cinco de la tarde*" was a very great poet, but those lacking the Castilian will have to take his word for it. Mr. Edgar Wreford, an actor of range, is thrown away on the stunted, inscrutable husband; as the wife Miss Madalena Nicol agonizes with endurance, and sometimes with a touching dignity.

Perhaps it is harsh to suggest that theatrical evangelists who write bad jokes about the quality of the Communion wine, and make vicars' daughters refer to "bloody silly miracles," are trafficking in spiritual cheesecake thinly coated with theology. Nevertheless, *How Can We Save Father?* now inserted in the Royal Court repertory, offends the palate without nourishing the soul. It tells of a mad clergyman cured by a



Charles Cuttinghame—MICHAEL DENISON

Roderick—JEREMY BRETT

passing psychiatrist (actually making passes at one of the daughters), and its failure is partly due to Mr. Oliver Marlow Wilkinson's faulty bump of drama. An already off-centre psychiatrist, affecting lunacy for purposes of treatment, but speaking lines clearly meant for sane ecclesiastical thinking, is bound to impair argument. Better results could be achieved—and at a considerable saving in royalties and production costs—by a few well-chosen readings from St. Paul.

Recommended

(Dates in brackets refer to *Punch* reviews)

At the Drop of a Hat (Fortune—16/1/57) is justly surviving the summer, as is *The Chalk Garden* (Haymarket—25/4/56). Paul Scofield is excellent in *A Dead Secret* (Piccadilly—5/6/57).

J. B. BOOTHROYD

AT THE PICTURES

3.10 to Yuma
Across the Bridge

HANDS up—I mean reach for the sky all who are tired of Westerns . . . H'm, there don't seem to be so many of you after all; and while the old convention is still capable of producing something as intelligently gripping as *3.10 to Yuma* (Director: Delmer Daves) there is certainly no reason for anyone to tire of it. The fact that the authorities didn't think this one worth a run in a central London cinema shows their pessimism, possibly justified, about the size (in central London) of the intelligent audience.

The essential story is very simple. Most of it is concerned with the agony of mind of Dan (Van Heflin), a poor rancher desperately in need of money, who finds himself alone responsible for taking Ben Wade, a notorious outlaw (Glenn Ford), to jail. The outlaw, contemptuously at his ease and confident of rescue, taunts him with the offer of bigger and bigger bribes if he will look the other way for a moment ("Nobody will know"); and the odds mount and mount that he will be killed by the outlaw's rescuers if he doesn't. They are to get the 3.10 to Yuma; they wait for it from about eleven o'clock at night in a hotel room near the station, and the whole time the tension of the film increases with the tension between the two men.

This is the central situation, but we have been introduced to them in different circumstances at the beginning of the film when the outlaw's men make use of Dan's little herd of ill-nourished cattle and the clouds of dust they raise (there is a crippling drought) in a coach hold-up; and there is an odd and I suppose strictly irrelevant little episode involving the outlaw and a solitary girl behind the bar in an otherwise deserted saloon, in the hot afternoon hour or two during which everybody else in the place is taking the accustomed siesta. Then



Time—A PRESENCE

Dan Evans—VAN HEFLIN

Ben Wade—GLENN FORD

[3.10 to Yuma

after the outlaw's arrest Dan is left in charge of him while the town marshal is away trying to find more volunteer deputies, and there is an excellent scene in Dan's house, over a family meal he feels called on to ask his prisoner to share.

The whole thing is full of these imaginative, atmospheric touches and interesting glimpses of character, and the suspense of the main scene as it moves to its climax is enormous. Mr. Ford coolly dominates it as the enigmatic, ironically amused, somehow perversely likeable outlaw, but Mr. Heflin does admirably too with a part that it must have been far more difficult to make sympathetic. This is a Western of the same notable kind as *Shane* and *High Noon*.

Across the Bridge (Director: Ken Annakin) is from a story by Graham Greene, and is—unusually, in these days—quite plainly by its very nature a short story rather than a novel. This has nothing to do with length, either in the story itself or in the time covered by the action: the film is slightly longer than the average, and plenty of novels and plays have been about shorter periods of time. I mean simply that the kind of point the narrative makes is a short-story kind of point.

It is none the worse for that, and the fact that the film as written (by Guy Elmes and Denis Freeman) is richer in background detail and subsidiary incident than the original does not mean that it seems in the least overloaded. It is about a financier on the run, making for Mexico to delay his capture; on the train to the border he has what he thinks is the luck to meet a Mexican resembling

him, whose passport he takes before bundling him out of the window—only to find himself later saddled with the man's dog and still on the run, because the Mexican was wanted, too. The dog is a nuisance, but at last, when he is alone and ostracized and sleeping in the open, it is his only friend; when it strays over the border where the police are waiting, the fugitive is tempted to fetch it—and that is the end of him. Rod Steiger as the financier has to carry most of the weight of the piece, and very impressively he does it; of the other characters the most memorable is the bright-eyed unscrupulous Mexican police chief, cleverly played by Noel Willman.

Survey

(Dates in brackets refer to *Punch* reviews)

Others of interest in a full week were *Love in the Afternoon*, a very gay, often witty, essentially crazy comedy fashionably pairing ageing man (Gary Cooper) with young girl (Audrey Hepburn); *Gunfight at the O.K. Corral*, a handsome traditional-style Western well worth seeing; and *Silk Stockings*, which tries to make a sort of *Funny Face* out of *Ninotchka* but is bright only in spots. *A Man Escaped* (10/7/57), *End as a Man* (7/8/57), *The Prince and the Showgirl* (10/7/57) and *Around the World in Eighty Days* (17/7/57) continue.

Among the releases is *3.10 to Yuma* (see above). Others include the excellently-done story of Lindbergh's Atlantic flight, *The Spirit of St. Louis* (5/6/57) and the misleadingly-titled, intelligently funny story of the electronic brain v. the girls in the reference department, *His Other Woman* (17/7/57).

RICHARD MALLETT